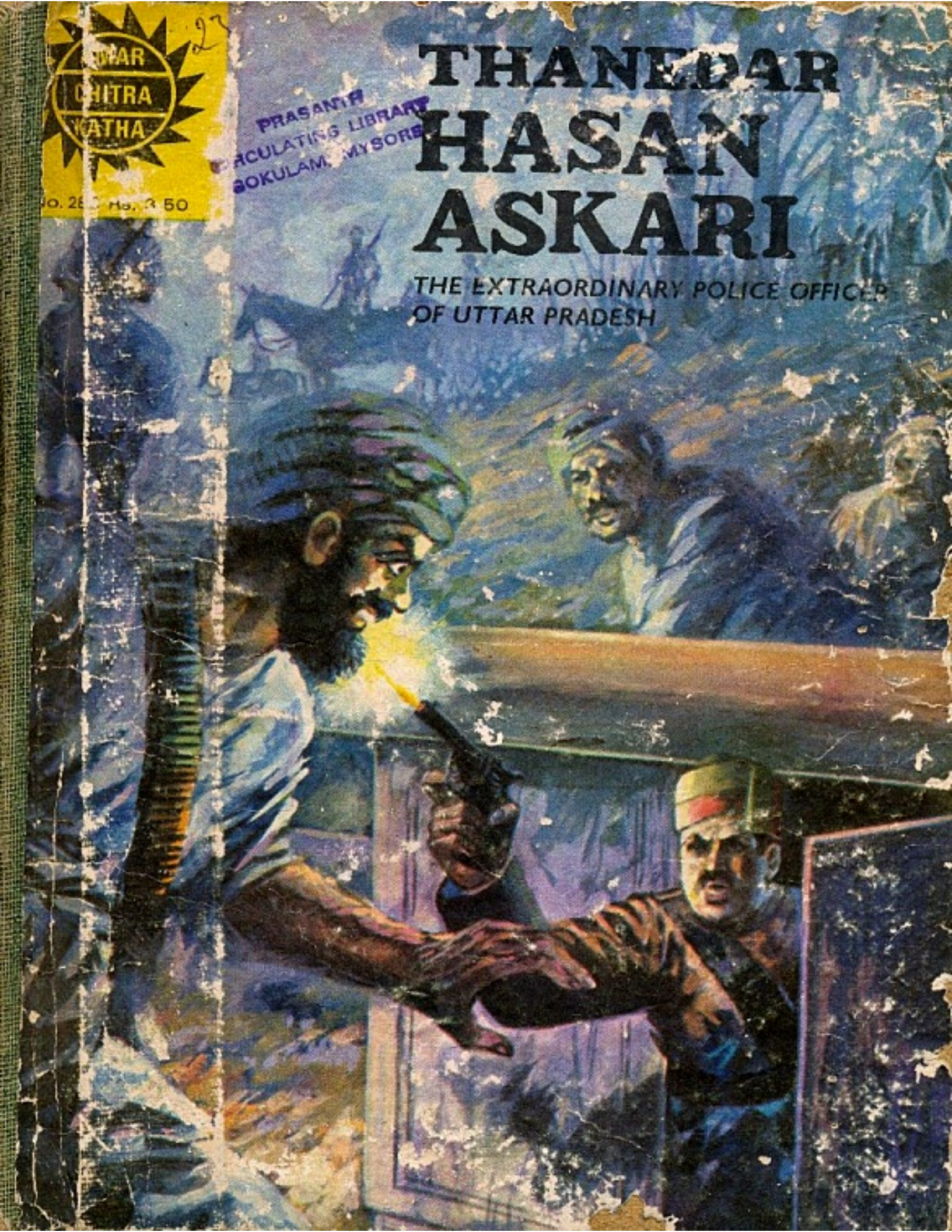


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THANEDAR HASAN ASKARI

THE EXTRAORDINARY POLICE OFFICER
OF UTTAR PRADESH



ANEDAR HASAN ASKARI



IN 1931, RASULABAD, IN KANPUR DISTRICT, WAS TERRORISED BY THE NOTORIOUS DACOIT, BETA SINGH, AND HIS GANG.

FOLLOWING NUMEROUS COMPLAINTS, THE DEPUTY INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE CALLED A MEETING OF THE STATION OFFICERS OF THE DISTRICT.



YOU, AS STATION OFFICER OF RASULABAD, HAVE FAILED MISERABLY IN YOUR TASK!



THIS DACOIT OPERATES WITH IMPUNITY UNDER YOUR VERY NOSE. YOU ARE INCOMPETENT AND A DISGRACE TO...



THE MAN WHO HAD INTERRUPTED HIM WAS HASAN ASKARI, THANEDAR OF SISMAU POLICE STATION.

IT IS WRONG OF YOU TO INSULT AN OFFICER IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS COLLEAGUES.



BEFORE THE DEPUTY INSPECTOR-GENERAL COULD SAY ANOTHER WORD, ASKARI WALKED OUT OF THE ROOM.



THE POLICE OFFICER WAS FURIOUS WITH ASKARI. LATER WHEN HE MET THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE —



SEND HIM TO RASULABAD. LET HIM DEAL WITH THE DACOITS HIMSELF!



ASKARI WAS TRANSFERRED TO RASULABAD. THERE —

NO WONDER THERE'S SO MUCH CRIME IN THIS DISTRICT. WE ARE GROSSLY UNDERSTAFFED.



IT WOULD TAKE HUNDREDS OF MEN TO FLUSH BETA SINGH AND HIS DESPERADOES OUT FROM THEIR HIDEOUT.



BUT I MUST NAB THAT MAN SOMEHOW.



HE SENT OUT SPIES TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT THE DACOIT LEADER. ONE DAY—



A LITTLE LATER, FOUR MEN CARRYING A PALANQUIN, ENTERED THE JUNGLE. THEY WERE POLICEMEN IN MUFTI.



THEY WERE PRECEDED BY THE INFORMER WHO HAD BROUGHT THEM NEWS ABOUT BETA SINGH.



INSIDE THE PALANQUIN, SAT THANEDAR ASKARI.

THERE'S A SMALL TEMPLE A FEW MILES AHEAD. IT LIES ON THE ONLY ROUTE BETA SINGH CAN POSSIBLY TAKE.



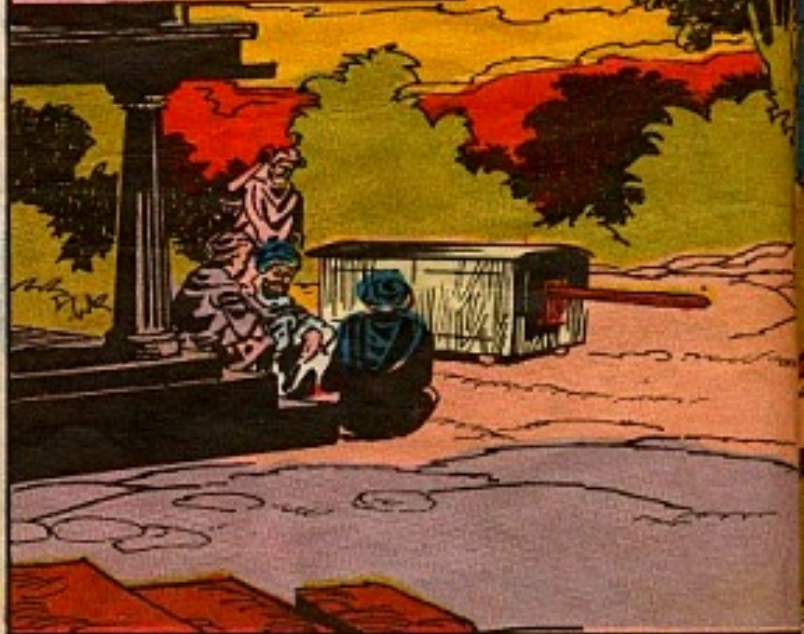
WE'LL WAIT FOR HIM THERE.



THE PARTY OF POLICEMEN REACHED THE TEMPLE BEFORE NIGHTFALL.



THEY PUT THE PALANQUIN DOWN AND SETTLED THEMSELVES NEAR IT.



AFTER SOME TIME —

THEY'RE
COMING,
SAHEB.



WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING HERE!

WE... WE
ARE POOR
KAHARS*,
SAHEB.



WE WERE TAKING
A BRIDE TO HER
FATHER-IN-LAW'S
HOUSE AND WE
LOST OUR
WAY.

A BRIDE,
EH?



LET ME
SEE HOW SHE
LOOKS!

HAHAHA!



?!





HIS RUSE WORKED. THE DACOITS THOUGHT HE HAD BROUGHT THE WHOLE POLICE FORCE WITH HIM.

BETA SINGH IS DEAD. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.



THE DACOITS FLED LEAVING THEIR DEAD LEADER BEHIND.



WITH THE DEATH OF BETA SINGH THE GANG BROKE UP. OTHER CRIMINALS TOO HASTILY LEFT RASULABAD.

THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES WERE IMPRESSED WITH ASKARI'S WORK AND AWARDED HIM THE KING'S POLICE MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY. THE MEDAL WAS PINNED ON HIM BY THE VERY MAN WHO HAD TRANSFERRED HIM TO RASULABAD.

YOU HAVE PROVED YOUR METTLE. YOU ARE A CREDIT TO THE FORCE.

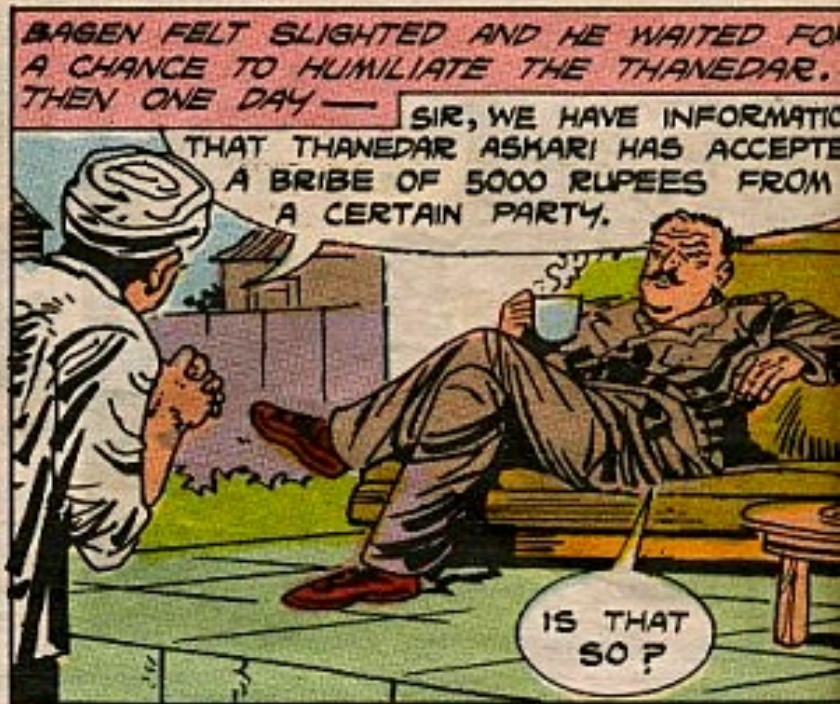
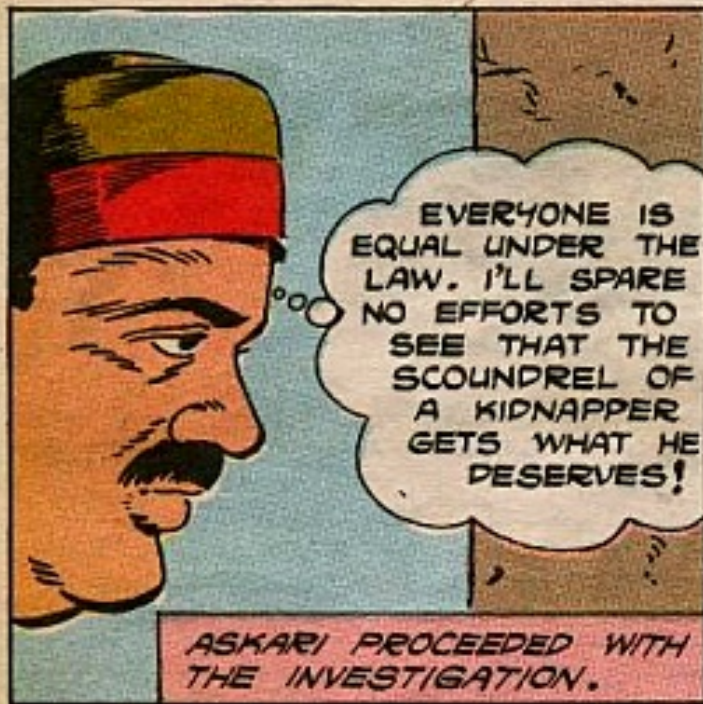


HOWEVER A FEW YEARS LATER, ASKARI GOT INTO TROUBLE WITH ANOTHER DEPUTY INSPECTOR-GENERAL, ONE MR. BAGEN. IT HAPPENED WHEN ASKARI ARRESTED A NOTORIOUS KIDNAPPER NAMED HANIF BAUDAM.

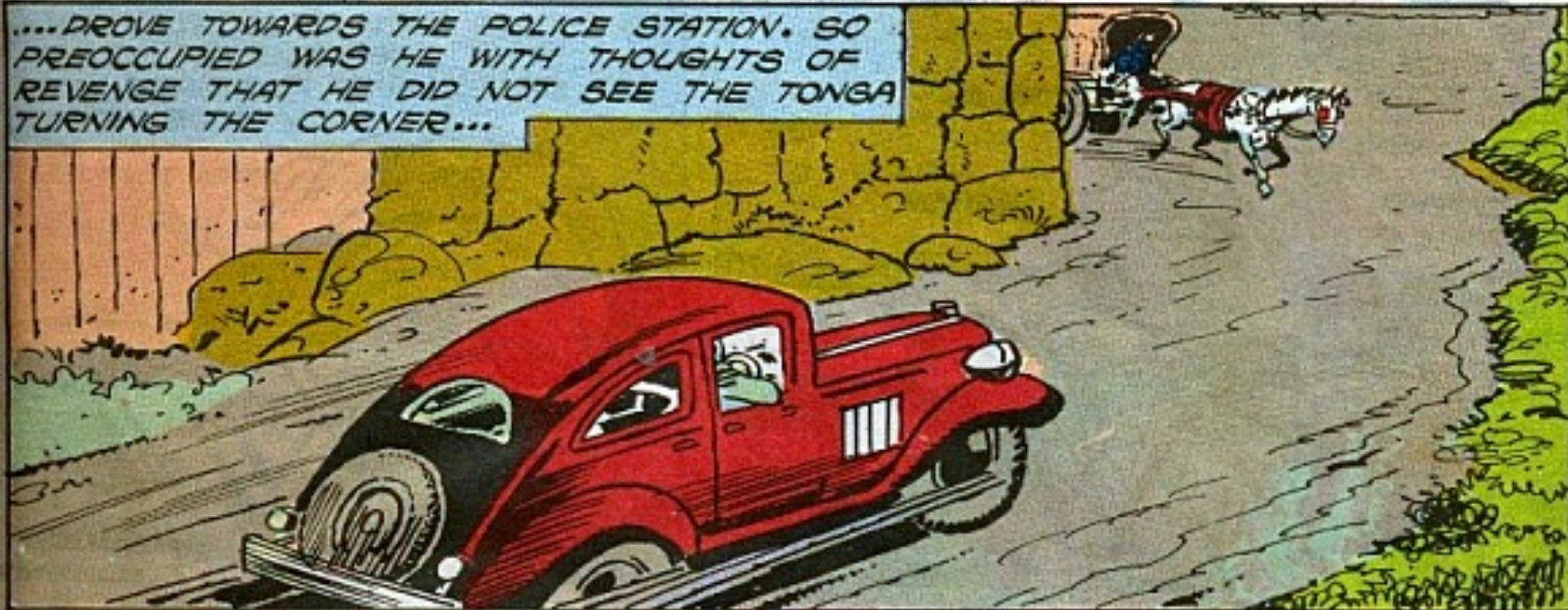
BAGEN CONTACTED ASKARI AND ASKED HIM TO RELEASE THE ARRESTED MAN.

HOW CAN HE EXPECT ME TO DO SUCH A THING?

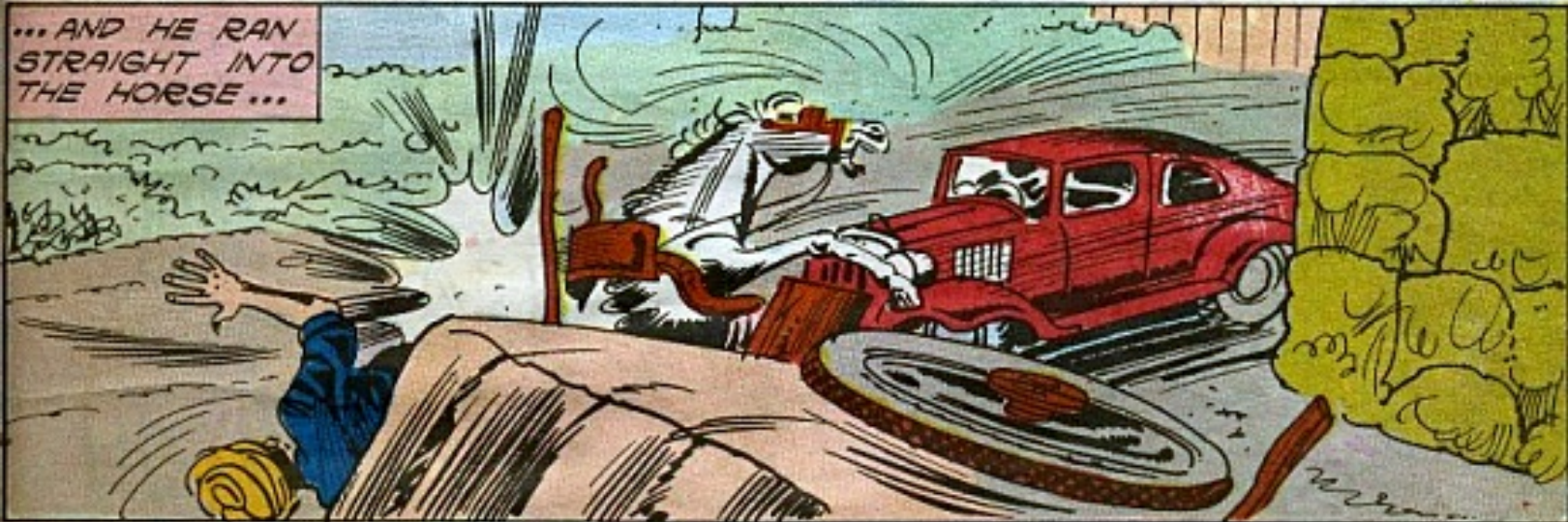




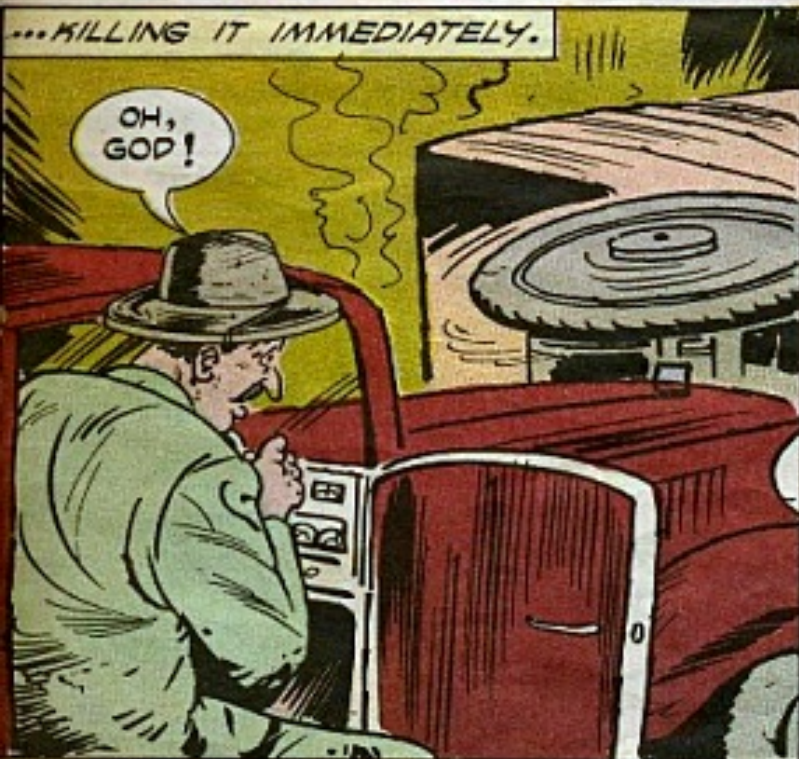
...DROVE TOWARDS THE POLICE STATION. SO PREOCCUPIED WAS HE WITH THOUGHTS OF REVENGE THAT HE DID NOT SEE THE TONGA TURNING THE CORNER...



...AND HE RAN STRAIGHT INTO THE HORSE...



...KILLING IT IMMEDIATELY.



THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED JUST OUTSIDE THE POLICE STATION. HASAN ASKARI AND THE OTHER POLICEMEN CAME RUSHING OUT.



THE THANEDAR RECOGNISED BAGEN AT ONCE BUT DID NOT GIVE ANY INDICATION OF HAVING DONE SO.

WHAT HAPPENED? HOW DID THIS ACCIDENT OCCUR?

IT WAS NOT MY FAULT, SAHEB.



I WAS DRIVING SLOWLY. THEN THE CAR CAME AT GREAT SPEED AND PLOUGHED INTO MY POOR HORSE.



THE DRIVER AND TWO PASSENGERS WERE SLIGHTLY INJURED. ASKARI TOOK DOWN THEIR NAMES AND ADDRESSES...



...AND ARRANGED FOR THEM TO BE TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL FOR TREATMENT.

THEN HE TURNED TO MR. BAGEN.

PLEASE COME WITH ME, SIR.



AT THE STATION, ASKARI OFFERED HIM A SEAT. THEN HE SENT FOR AN ANGLO-INDIAN SERGEANT. WHEN THE MAN CAME-

I WANT YOU TO ARREST MR. BAGEN UNDER SECTION 56 OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE.

WHAT!





THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE FINALLY PERSUADED THE THANEDAR TO LET THE DEPUTY INSPECTOR-GENERAL GO. AS THE TWO OFFICERS WERE ABOUT TO LEAVE, ASKARI SALUTED THEM.



AND THEN PULLED OUT AN ENVELOPE FROM HIS POCKET.





ASKARI'S ATTEMPT TO ARREST HIS OWN SUPERIOR WAS CHARACTERISTIC OF HIM. HE WAS FEARLESS IN THE EXECUTION OF HIS DUTIES. ONCE AT KANPUR —



THE OWNER WAS A PROMINENT INDUSTRIALIST AND A MULTI-MILLIONAIRE. WHEN ASKARI WENT TO SEE HIM —

YOU ARE MAKING AN UNNECESSARY FUSS ABOUT NOTHING, THANEDAR.

THE MAN WAS A TROUBLE-MAKER...

I DON'T CARE WHAT HE WAS.

YOU ARE UNDER ARREST.

WHAT!

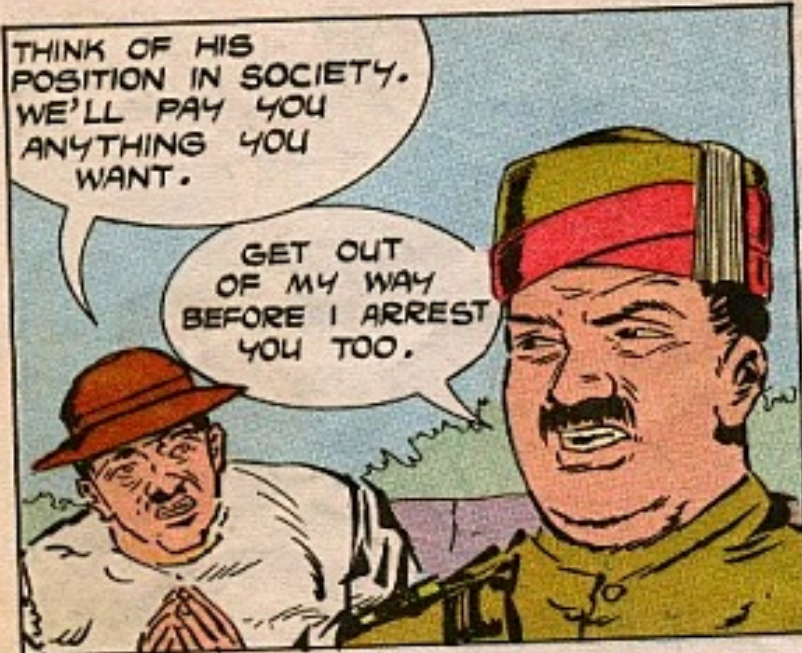
DO YOU KNOW WHAT I CAN DO TO YOU? I CAN BUY AND SELL THIS TOWN. I...

HANDCUFF HIM!

WAIT!

THE MANAGER OF THE FACTORY TRIED TO INTERCEDE ON BEHALF OF HIS MASTER.

PLEASE DON'T ARREST SETHJI, THANEDAR SAHEB. I BEG YOU.



MANY SENIOR POLICE OFFICERS DID INDEED TRY TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF THE INDUSTRIALIST BUT ASKARI REFUSED TO GIVE IN TO THEM.

ONE SMART LAWYER FINALLY SOUGHT THE ADVICE OF THE HEAD CLERK OF THE POLICE STATION.



THEN HE MET ASKARI.



ASKARI ACCOMPANIED THE LAWYER TO THE WIDOW'S HOUSE.



THE THANEDAR LEFT THE HOUSE IN A PENSIVE MOOD.





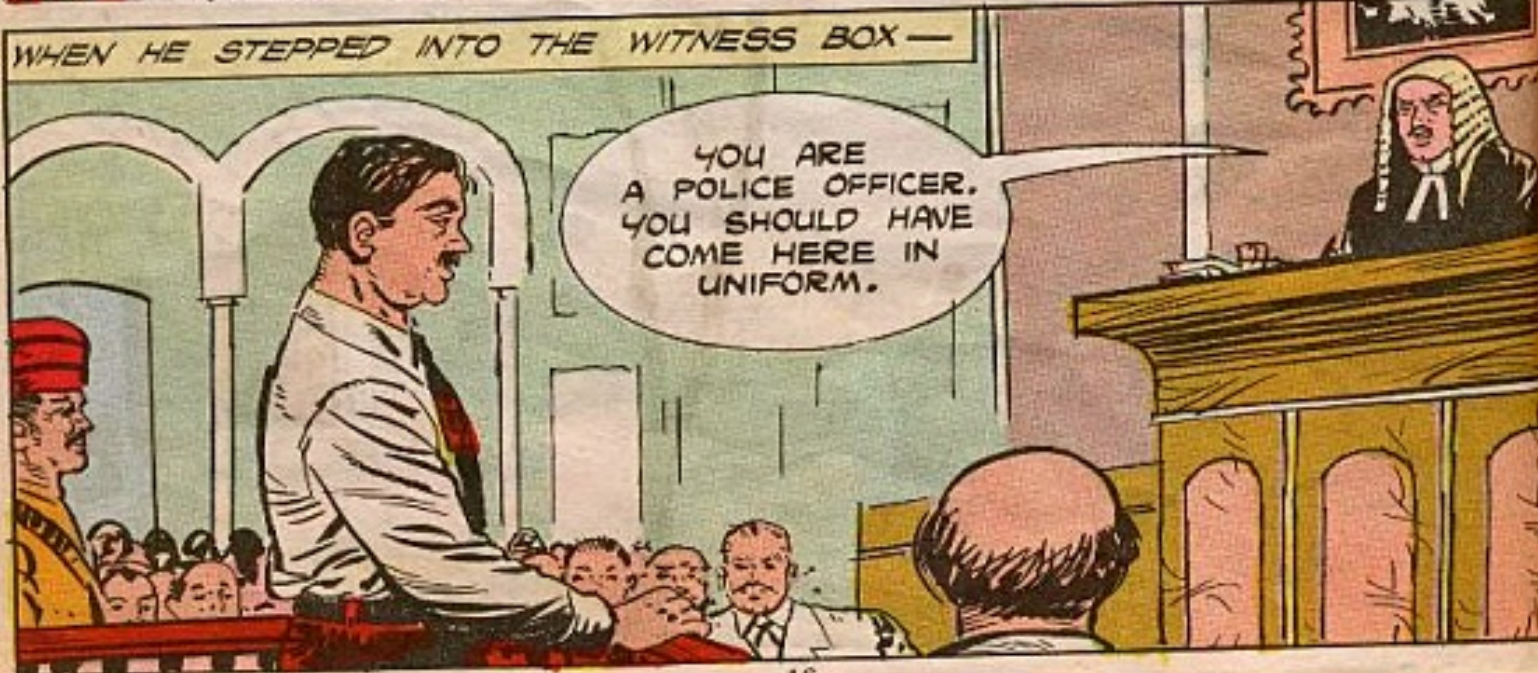
MANY YEARS LATER, ONE OF THE PROUDEST GUESTS AT THE MARRIAGE OF THE WIDOW'S FIRST DAUGHTER WAS HASAN ASKARI. AT THE WEDDING HE PERFORMED THE FUNCTION OF THE MATERNAL UNCLE OF THE BRIDE.



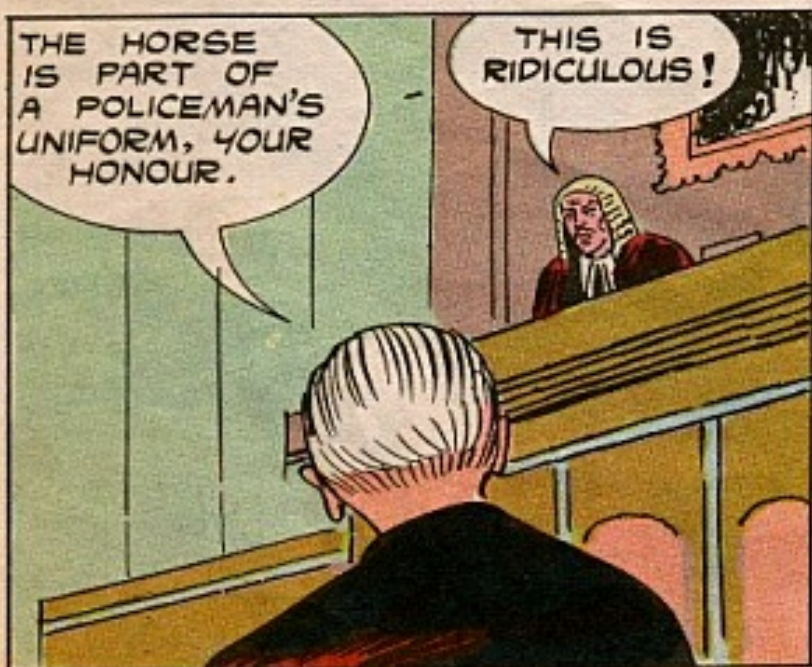
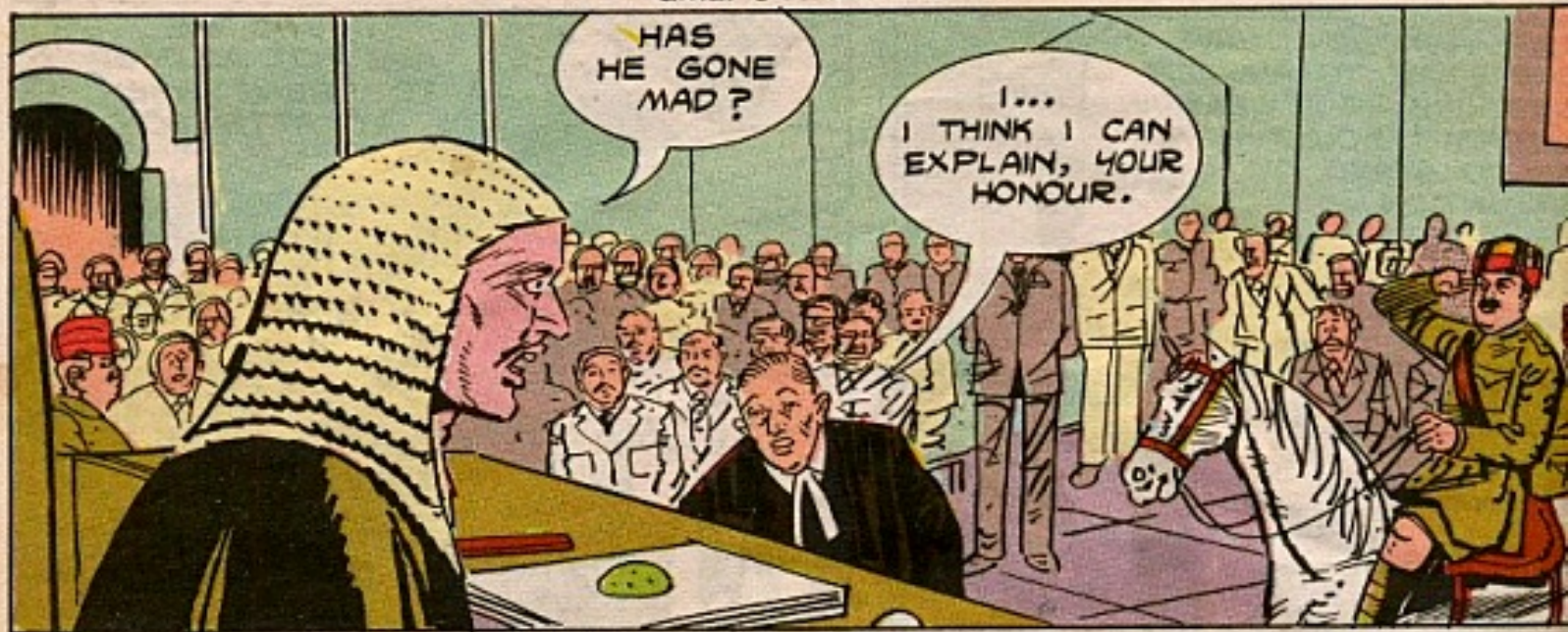
IN HIS NUMEROUS TUSSELS WITH HIS SUPERIORS, ASKARI OFTEN CAME OUT ON TOP BECAUSE OF HIS KEEN KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAW. ONE DAY HE WAS CALLED TO THE ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT TO GIVE EVIDENCE IN A MURDER CASE.



WHEN HE STEPPED INTO THE WITNESS BOX —









IN 1944 HE WAS IN CHARGE OF THE COLLECTORGUNJ POLICE STATION. ONE DAY HE HEARD THAT A CERTAIN CONSTABLE HAD ACCEPTED A SMALL BRIBE. HE CALLED THE MAN IN.





THE NEXT MORNING —

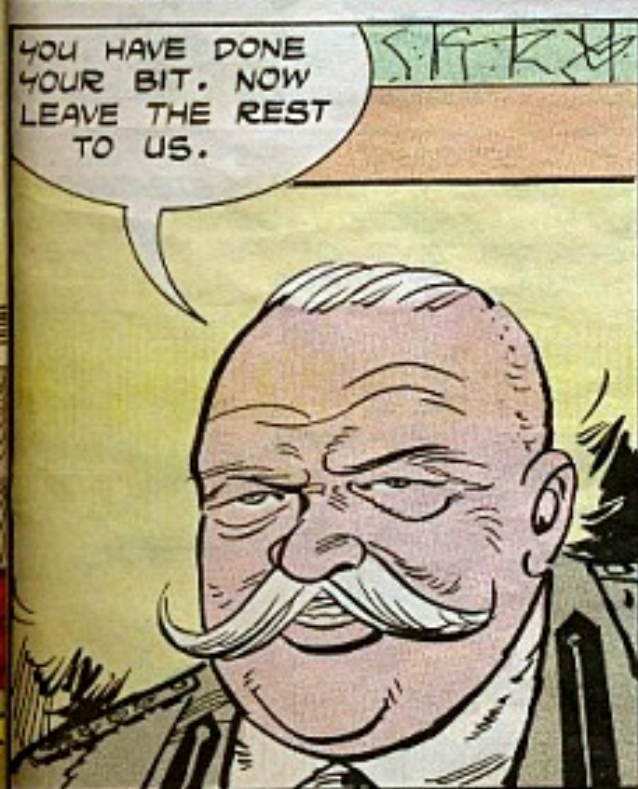


THE MAN WHO HAD GIVEN ME THE BRIBE HAS COMPLAINED TO HIM. PLEASE SAVE ME, SAHEB.



ASKARI WENT TO SEE THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE.





IF YOU INSIST ON PUNISHING THE MAN, NOT A SINGLE POLICEMAN WILL TURN UP FOR DUTY TOMORROW.

HOW DARE YOU THREATEN ME!



GET OUT OF HERE!

THIS IS GOVERNMENT PROPERTY, SIR. I HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO STAY HERE, IF I WISH.



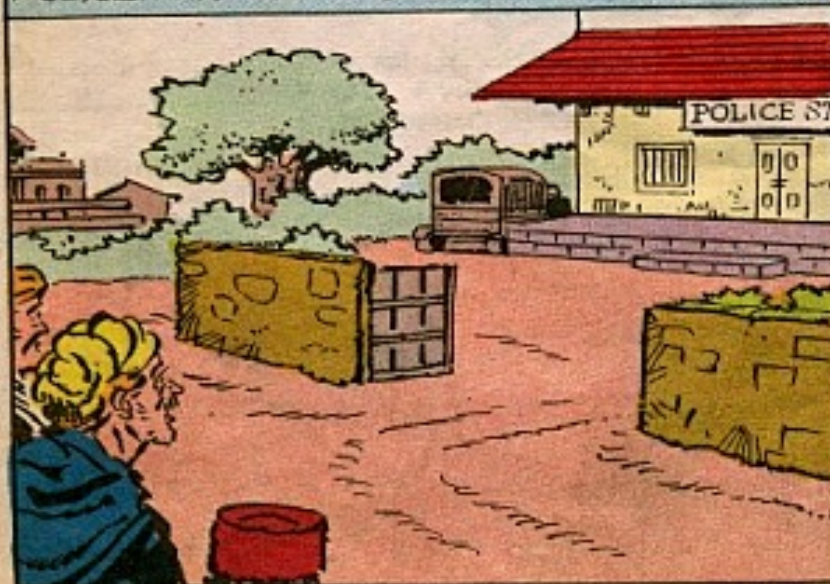
THE NEXT MOMENT, ASKARI SALUTED THE OFFICER...



...AND STALKED OUT.



THE FOLLOWING MORNING, NOT A SINGLE POLICEMAN REPORTED FOR DUTY.



THE RESIDENCES OF THE DISTRICT JUDGE, THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE, THE DEPUTY INSPECTOR-GENERAL, THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, THE COMMISSIONER, WERE ALL LEFT UNGUARDED.



EVEN TRAFFIC POLICEMEN TOOK THE DAY OFF.



THE STRIKE WAS TOTAL. THIS WAS THE FIRST POLICE STRIKE IN THE HISTORY OF UTTAR PRADESH. YET NOT A SINGLE CRIME WAS COMMITTED ANYWHERE IN THE STATE ON THAT DAY. EVEN CRIMINALS, IT SEEMED, WERE IN SYMPATHY WITH THE THANEDAR.

IN THE EVENING THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE AND THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE CALLED ON ASKARI.



THEY CHATTED WITH HIM FOR A WHILE AND THEN ASKED HIM TO ACCOMPANY THEM TO THE RAILWAY STATION.



WHEN THEY REACHED THE STATION, A TRAIN WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE FOR LUCKNOW.



THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE AND THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE ESCORTED THE THANEDAR TO A FIRST CLASS COMPARTMENT. THEN —



AN HOUR LATER AT THE SUPERINTENDENT'S HOUSE —





WHEN ASKARI ARRIVED AT THE POLICE OFFICER'S HOUSE HE FOUND BOTH THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE AND THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE WAITING FOR HIM.

AH, THERE YOU ARE!



COME SIT DOWN, THANEDAR.

THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE AND THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE DID THEIR BEST TO ASSUAGE ASKARI'S FEELINGS.

AND THE THANEDAR GRACIOUSLY DID NOT SAY ANYTHING MORE ABOUT PREFERRED CHARGES AGAINST THEM. SOON, THE THREE MEN CAME TO AN UNDERSTANDING.

I HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE TRANSFER, SIR...



...ONLY TO THE WAY IT WAS DONE. I SHALL LEAVE FOR BASTI TOMORROW AFTERNOON.



THE NEWS OF ASKARI'S TRANSFER SADDENED EVERYONE IN THE TOWN. HIS FEARLESSNESS AND HIS DEVOTION TO DUTY HAD ENDEARED HIM TO THE PEOPLE. HUNDREDS OF THEM CAME TO SEE HIM OFF THE NEXT DAY.



WHEN HE STEPPED OUT OF THE POLICE STATION HE FOUND THIRTY TRUCKS LINED UP OUTSIDE.



LET ME PUT YOUR LUGGAGE IN MY TRUCK, SIR.

NO, NO, LET ME PUT IT IN MINE.

FRIENDS, I DON'T NEED A TRUCK FOR MY...



WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, SIR? HERE, GIVE ME THAT.

FINALLY ALL THIRTY TRUCKS SET OUT FOR BASTI. EACH OF THEM CARRIED ONE ARTICLE OF ASKARI'S LUGGAGE...



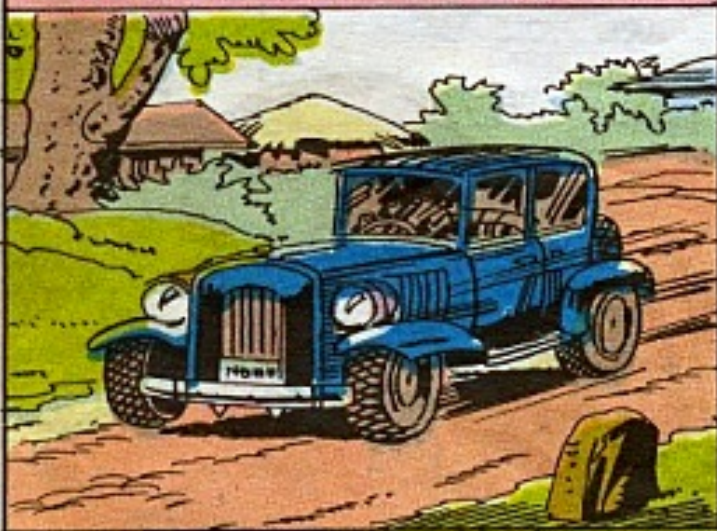
...THE LAST TRUCK CARRYING ONLY HIS CAT!



ASKARI HIMSELF WENT BY TRAIN. WHEN HE ALIGHTED AT BASTI HE FOUND THE INDIAN SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE OF THAT DISTRICT WAITING FOR HIM.



THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE TOOK ASKARI TO HIS BUNGALOW...



...FOR A BRIEFING. AFTER THAT WAS OVER —

THANEDAR, MY HONOUR IS IN YOUR HANDS. PLEASE DON'T START ANY CONTROVERSY HERE.



I SHALL DO MY DUTY TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY.

THAT'S WHAT I'M AFRAID OF.



ASKARI TOOK CHARGE OF THE POLICE STATION AND THEN IMMEDIATELY WENT BACK TO THE SUPERINTENDENT'S HOUSE.

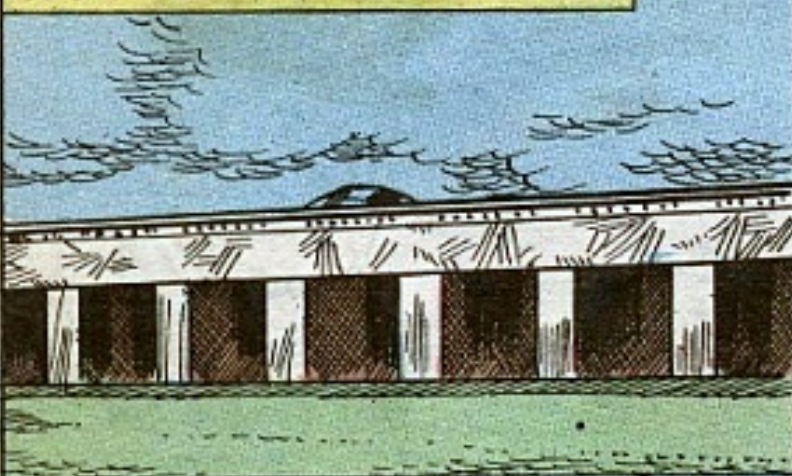
WHAT'S THE MATTER?

SIR, I WANT TO GO ON LEAVE...





FINALLY HE BUILT A SEVEN-ROOM HOSPITAL FOR HIS PATIENTS.



HE TRAINED AND KEPT ANOTHER MAN IN CHARGE WHEN HE HAD TO RESUME DUTY.

IN 1945 HE WAS POSTED TO ALLAHABAD. WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF HIS ARRIVAL, HE ORDERED, UNDER THE GOONDA ACT, THE ARREST OF ALL ANTI-SOCIAL ELEMENTS IN THE DISTRICT.



THE JAILS BECAME FULL. SOME OF THE PRISONERS WERE INFLUENTIAL MEN. BUT AS USUAL, THANEDAR ASKARI REFUSED TO RELEASE ANY OF THEM.



HIS STUBBORNNESS EARNED HIM THE DISPLEASURE OF HIS SUPERIORS AND HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER POLICE STATION SITUATED IN A PRINCELY STATE. HERE HE CAUSED GREAT EMBARRASSMENT TO THE AUTHORITY BY ARRESTING THE CORRUPT RAJAH HIMSELF.



HE WAS HASTILY TRANSFERRED TO HARDOI AND FROM THERE TO PIHANI. WHEN HE RETIRED ON DECEMBER 31, 1946 AFTER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE, HE WAS THE THANEDAR OF PIHANI POLICE STATION. HE BEGAN AS A THANEDAR AND HE RETIRED AS ONE.

